

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 IO-13 AGRE-00 /106 W
-----066015 271731Z /42

R 261506Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8374
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: LA, TH, ETRD
SUBJ: LAO TRADE TEAM COMPLETES TRADE ARRANGEMENTS

1. IN A FOLLOWUP TO THE RTG FOREIGN MINISTER'S VISIT TO VIENTIANE IN JUNE, A LAO TRADE TEAM CAME TO BANGKOK JULY 11 TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS TO THE TRADE AND TRANSIT AGREEMENT SIGNED EARLIER IN VIENTIANE.

2. THE LAOTIAN TEAM WAS LED BY THE DEPUTY TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER KHAMMA PHOMKONG. THE MEMBERS OF THE NINE-MAN TEAM WERE MOSTLY FROM THE LPDR STATE TRADING ORGANIZATION DESCRIBED AS THE ONLY ORGANIZATION NOW PERMITTED TO ENGAGE IN THE IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE.

3. THE VISIT ENDED WITH FIRM ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN EXCHANGE OF DOLLARS TEN MILLION IN TIMBER FOR AN ASSORTMENT OF SPARE PARTS (MAINLY TRUCK AND TEXTILE PLANT) AS WELL AS PRIMARY GOODS AND COMMODITIES. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE, THE TALKS WERE QUITE AMICABLE, THE MAIN DIFFICULTY BEING THE LAO ATTEMPTS TO GET AN EXCESSIVELY HIGH PRICE FOR THEIR TIMBER. ADDITIONALLY, THE LAO TEAM STRONGLY RESISTED
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THAI OFFERS FOR ITEMS THEY CONSIDERED AS UNNECESSARY CONSUMER GOODS. ALTHOUGH PRESS ACCOUNTS INDICATED THAT READY-MADE CLOTHING WAS INCLUDED IN THE AGREEMENT, IN FACT THE LAO INSISTED IN TAKING ONLY CLOTH AND THREAD.

4. MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOWEVER, CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS WAS MADE TOWARD SOLVING ONE OF THE THORNIER ISSUES

BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES--THAT OF TRANSIT GOODS. THE LPDR HAS LONG COMPLAINED OF BEING LIMITED TO THE USE OF THE RTG STATE-OWNED TRANSPORT COMPANY, THE EXPRESS TRANSIT ORGANIZATION (ETO) FOR THE TRANS-SHIPING OF GOODS THROUGH THAILAND BECAUSE THE ETO CHARGED HIGHER THAN COMMERCIAL RATES. UNDER THE NEW AGREEMENT THE LAOTIANS WILL STILL BE REQUIRED TO USE THE ETO. HOWEVER, THE RTG HAS PROMISED TO CHARGE THE CURRENT COMMERCIAL RATES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE LPDR TEAM AGREED TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FERRY RUNS AT THE CROSSING POINT TO MEET THE DAILY DEMAND AS WELL AS SPEED UP THE PROCESSING OF DOCUMENTATION AND THE HANDLING OF THE FREIGHT. O'DONOHUE

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Message Attributes

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